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GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE ON EDIBLE OIL PRODUCTION IN CHINA

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Comment and Summary: The following report gives in full a directive of the Government Administrative Council, People's Republic of China, on "Increasing the Production of Oil Bearing Crops." The directive lists the shortcomings in the production of oil-bearing crops and outlines the steps to be taken to expand production of these crops. This directive was passed by the 198th session of the Government Administrative Council on 17 December 1953 and promulgated by Premier Chou En-lai on 25 December 1953.]

The national production of edible vegetable oils at present is not equal to the demand of the consumers for this product. The total production of this commodity now amounts to only 70-80 percent of the pre-Sino-Japanese War figure. While the production of industrial products, food, cotton, and other agricultural crops has shown great gains, the production of edible vegetable oil crops has failed to keep up with the growing demands of the masses who now enjoy a higher standard of living.

Although it is proper that cadres should give priority to the expansion of food and cotton production, still, steps must also be taken by them to correct the error of neglecting edible oil purchase operations in certain rural areas where surpluses are glutting the market.

Edible vegetable oils in China are mainly extracted from soybeans, peanuts, tea seed, cottonseed, sesame seed, sunflower seed, coconuts, etc. The basic solution to the shortage of edible vegetable oils, therefore, is to increase the acreage planted to these crops. This is a certain way to satisfy the growing demands of the people for edible vegetable oils.

Therefore, the following directive has been issued:

1. In most areas, farmers treat edible vegetable oil crops as subsidiary production and fail to give them the proper care. Therefore, all agricultural technical stations and experimental farms should map plans to develop the production of edible vegetable oil crops by teaching the farmers to give adequate water, fertilizer, and care to these crops. This is particularly true of the 1954 peanut and bean crops which cover an extensive acreage.
2. Without detracting from the production of food crops, the acreage devoted to the growing of edible vegetable oil bearing crops should be greatly expanded. While acreage devoted to soybeans should be stabilized at the 1953 figure, yet, in northern Manchuria, where conditions are favorable, the acreage should be expanded.
3. In North China, edible vegetable oil plants can still be grown between the corn and kaoliang crops; while in South China, beans and peanuts can be grown at the edges of the fields and on the hillsides.

In Hopeh, Shantung, Honan, Kiangsu, Hupeh, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Szechuan, and Shensi provinces, much of the sandy loam farmland is devoted to beans. A part of this land should be converted to peanuts as the latter have a higher oil content.

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In the sections of south China where winter wheat cannot be grown, the idle land should be planted to edible vegetable oil crops.

The production of sesame oil in the major producing districts of Hupeh, Anhwei, and Honan should be maintained at the 1953 level. This supply should be augmented by planting flax and sunflower crops in the uncultivated areas.

While the planting of coconut trees is limited to Hainan Island, other oil-producing trees, such as walnut and tea seed oil trees, could be planted in the hilly regions in all parts of the country. These trees will not only increase the supply of edible oils, but will also provide the peasants with an extra source of income and protect the soil against erosion.

4. The government organizations in every administrative area and province concerned in this activity, must direct their subsidiary offices to work out plans for the expansion of edible vegetable oil production in areas under their jurisdiction. The over-all plan must be submitted to the National Planning Commission, the Finance and Economic Committee of the Government Administrative Council, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

5. The People's Bank of China, through its various local offices, should promote the production of edible vegetable oils by making loans for such purposes. In the peanut growing areas, seed loans are especially essential, as peanut growing requires a large capital. State trading organizations should promote the production of edible vegetable oils by guaranteeing prices to producers and signing contracts for edible oil futures. In areas where prices for edible oils are weak at present, the Ministry of Trade should take the necessary steps to adjust prices for edible vegetable oils to provide an incentive to the producers.

6. The production of edible vegetable oils can also be greatly increased by greater efforts in the organization of mutual aid teams and producer cooperatives. These groups can fully utilize the land and labor of the peasants and also bring marginal land into production. However, as the independent farmer still predominates throughout the nation today, the potentialities of developing edible vegetable oil production among this group should not be overlooked.

The shortage of edible vegetable oils will be a long-range problem. Government organizations engaged in agricultural activities at all levels should give this matter their undivided attention. Provinces and hsien located in the centers producing edible vegetable oils must exert every effort to increase the production of this vital commodity. This is in line with the policy of the government for a planned expansion in the supply of foodstuffs and other economic goods.

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